



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD - **Public Hearing**

Conrail Derailment in Paulsboro, NJ with Vinyl Chloride Release

GROUP	3
EXHIBIT	
X	

Agency / Organization

Environmental Protection Agency

Title

EPA Discussion of Shelter in
Place Recommendation (NJDEP-1019-
NJDEP-1019)

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Subject: Re: Incident-Specific RRT Conference Call, Paulsboro Train Derailment
Date: Wednesday, December 12, 2012 5:23:19 PM

I don't know if I can participate in tomorrow's call (I'm working the graveyard shift and can't guarantee I'll be awake), however, I wanted to pass this along:

A major public concern at the public meeting last night was that, besides all of the other communication problems (emergency and otherwise) during this response, many citizens didn't know what the term "shelter in place" meant and what they were supposed to do, which is totally understandable for someone who's unfamiliar with the concept. The local emergency official stated that when the alert is sounded, citizens are expected to go inside their homes immediately and shut all doors, windows, vents, and turn off all air circulation (heat, etc). Many people expressed concern about people, particularly the elderly, who live alone and/or who would need assistance to perform this in a timely manner, especially given the proximity of the removal site to the neighborhoods. The local emergency official then stated that people should also use duct tape and plastic sheeting to further seal all doors, windows, air conditioners, vents, etc. This drew outright groans from the audience, and justifiably so. Using duct tape and plastic to seal a room for protection from chemical releases is referred to as "expedient sheltering" and has been completely dismissed and is no longer recommended by the mainstream emergency services and American Chemical Council for public protective actions for chemical releases. Research has shown that successfully sealing even a small room with one door and a window can take anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes, and that's with trained people with adequate supplies immediately on hand. (This does not include emergency warning and public reaction times, etc). More importantly, there is not a single documented or known case anywhere of anyone ordering and/or successfully implementing expedient sheltering during an actual chemical emergency. That's why it is no longer recommended. I wanted to mention this because it's important that everyone's understanding of realistic, feasible public warning and protective action options are appropriate.

Dwayne Harrington, EPA Region 2